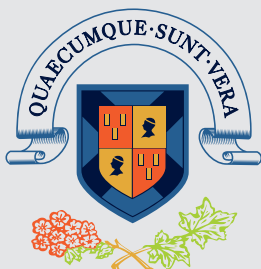




Teliaq ta'n Teluek Strategic Research & Innovation Plan 2026-2031

Approved by University Senate—February 27, 2026



ST. FRANCIS XAVIER
UNIVERSITY



Land Acknowledgement

St. Francis Xavier University stands on the lands of Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded home of the Mi'kmaw. We express our deep gratitude and appreciation to the generations of Mi'kmaw who, since time immemorial, have loved and stewarded these lands and the beings who call them home.

Colonization is not just history; it exists in the present. While we strive to decolonize ourselves and our institution, we know there is still much for us to learn. We are committed to doing the hard work of self-reflection and to repairing relationships with the Mi'kmaw on whose lands we reside, including embracing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada Calls to Action and embodying their spirit in our day-to-day lives.

Treaty Responsibilities

The spirit of the TRC Calls to Action and the Peace and Friendship Treaties (1725-1779) is embodied in every element of our Strategic Research Plan. As we have engaged in this strategic research planning process with our campus community, we have received resounding support for increasing reconciliation and decolonization efforts at StFX and for enhancing our research collaborations with the Mi'kmaq Nation in our research. This research relationship must be based on trust and move forward in a good way, with mutual respect for the abundant land and waters of Mi'kma'ki, and with concern for all beings who call this territory home. As a community, StFX is committed to meeting our ongoing treaty obligations and to recognizing that after ten years of the TRC, only 15 of the 94 Calls to Action have been completed. We still have much work to do to continually work towards reconciliation and treaty responsibility, in research and in all aspects of our campus community life.

As part of our commitment to reconciliation, we have named our plan *Teliaq ta'n Teluek* (What They are Saying is True), a Mi'kmaq translation of our Latin university motto, *Quaecumque Sunt Vera* or *Whatsoever Things are True*. This name will help us conduct our research in the spirit of truth and reconciliation and will ground the guiding principles of this plan in Mi'kmaq knowledge, teachings, and understanding.

Ms't wiaqpulti'kl ankukamkewe'l | We are all treaty people

Language Keeping

Our plan for *Teliaq ta'n Teluek* is in constant conversation. We have relied on Mi'kmaq dictionaries from the 7 districts of Mi'kma'ki while we form community conversations with Mi'kmaq language keepers closer to our campus home in Nalikitquniejik. We are grateful to language keeper Carol Ann Jeddore for her



ongoing work in conversation with us on the Mi'kmaq knowledge that is at the heart of this plan.

We expect that the language of this plan will evolve with community knowledge in Mi'kma'ki, and we will follow the direction of these changes accordingly. We are committed to being relationship-based in our translation and conceptual work in the spirit of *Teliaq ta'n Teluek*.

Special thanks to Lisa Lunney Borden, L. Jane McMillan, Tyler Sack, Barbara Sylliboy and Simon Sylliboy for consultation and conversation on language keeping as well as all members of our university's Committee on Reconciliation and the President's Action Committee on Anti-Racism for helping generate this knowledge together.

Maw-lukwitek: We Are Working Together

StFX's new Strategic Research Plan (SRP) presents an opportunity to demonstrate our alignment with all federal Tri-Council and Canada Research Chairs (CRC) programs and to present our ongoing work in tandem with emerging provincial research priorities at Research Nova Scotia that seek to strengthen industry partnerships and drive innovation, job creation, and economic growth. StFX's SRP reflects the institutional mission of a primarily undergraduate, comprehensive research university committed to research excellence and public engagement in the service of community, rooted in Mi'kma'ki, and shows how we will meet these programs and priorities as we tackle society's greatest challenges together for our collective benefit.

StFX's Strategic Research Plan is informed directly by a campus-wide feedback process initiated by the new Associate Vice President Research, Graduate & Professional Studies in the fall term of 2025, and voted on and approved by the Research Advisory Committee and our University Senate. We have also sent the SRP for feedback to the Committee on Reconciliation, the President's Action Committee on Anti-Racism (PACAR), and the Accessibility Advisory Committee. Using the guiding principle of *maw-lukwitek*, the Mi'kmaq concept of working together, our objective in this SRP is to be guided by our own community in our research. During this feedback process, hundreds of StFX community members came together to provide ideas about the future direction of our shared research ecosystem. We ran targeted engagement sessions with Deans, research chairs, labs, programs, departments, schools, and faculties. We organized a campus-wide Town Hall on Research Futures, a Senate Forum on Research, open office hours, online surveys, and feedback modules to capture all voices on campus. The commitment of these groups has been — and will continue to be — of tremendous value to our continued collaborative work to build StFX's research futures. As we



move this plan forward, consultations will continue with our entire campus community to ensure that implementation is collaborative, transparent, and ongoing.

Our campus community is diverse. It includes our four academic faculties (Arts, Business, Education, and Science), the Angus L. Macdonald Library, the Coady Institute for global and community-driven leadership, the Frank McKenna Centre for Leadership, and our three major endowed research institutes, the Brian Mulroney Institute of Government, the Deveau Institute for Indigenous Governance and Social Justice, and the Victor & Mona Dahdaleh Institute for Health Innovation. Students work across all these parts of campus and develop research leadership both in and out of the classroom. As we plan our next five years of research, innovation, and creativity, we must be ready to support our people in this work, meeting the needs and ambitions of our researchers so we can create the conditions for flourishing. Being at the forefront of research innovation means growing at the pace of our researchers, helping them attract top funding and knowledge mobilization opportunities, and challenging emerging thinkers and future partners in truly collaborative work. Our researchers and leaders have received top national and international awards, including the King Charles Coronation Medal, the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal, the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Palmes académiques, and elections to the Royal Society of Canada and the Royal Historical Society (UK).

Taluekek: What is it Used For?

The objectives of StFX's Strategic Research Plan are to grow and caretaker our research ecosystem by rooting it in our shared vision, purpose, and values. We will use this plan as a guiding document to determine the future of our Canada Research Chair strategic allocations, to recruit national and international top talent to StFX through the Canada Impact+ Research Chairs and Emerging Leaders programs, and to continually nurture and grow our existing research excellence, creativity, and innovation. When we need to remember *taluekek* (what is it used for?), we can return to the SRP for research direction to move us forward in a good way.

At StFX, teaching, student mentorship, community outreach, and public service are the foundations that help us cultivate and sustain our research. We are seeing a period of growth not only in our undergraduate enrollments but also through a carefully planned expansion of our graduate programs at both the master's and doctoral levels. The future of StFX will be built on our enhanced training and mentorship of highly qualified personnel at all levels, from undergraduate students to postdoctoral fellows. Our immersive educational environments provide foundations for students to provide outreach, participate in longstanding campus engagement with service learning and adult education, undertake collaborative research to drive innovation in community and with industry, and tell our stories to produce creative works that change how we see, listen to, and understand the



world around us. These foundations enable us to fully embrace the communities that benefit from our work and continue to our drive for research excellence. What StFX has accomplished over the past 170 years has been truly extraordinary; originally established in partnership with the Roman Catholic Diocese and influenced by the community education and economic cooperative model of the Dr. Rev. Moses Coady's Antigonish Movement, StFX has evolved into a diverse learning community with global reach through the Coady Institute, while still based in a small university-town campus that welcomes and serves all and where professors know your name.

StFX's community partnerships also extend locally beyond the rural environment of our campus community, which is located in Nalikitquniejk/Antigonish, Nova Scotia, in the Epekwitk aq Piktuk district of Mi'kma'ki. We have longstanding historical relationships with and responsibilities to the nearby Mi'kmaq communities of Paqtnekek, Puksaqte'kne'katik, and Wékopekwitk, as well as to 8 of the province's 52 historical African Nova Scotian communities, in Trenton, Antigonish, New Glasgow, Sunnyville, Lincolnville, Monastery, Mulgrave, and Upper Big Tracadie. Our strong ties to these communities drive our ongoing research on and off campus, where we strive to make a real-world impact by enhancing innovation and creativity. Having recently signed an agreement with the Confederation of Mainland Mi'kmaq to strengthen collaboration, StFX is committed to amplifying Indigenous knowledge, supporting treaty education, and building stronger frameworks that elevate Mi'kmaq governance, history, and identity within the university culture. This past year, StFX also opened the Dr. Agnes Calliste Academic and Cultural Centre, honouring Dr. Calliste's legacy at StFX of supporting Black student excellence and fostering their success. This initiative further strengthens the university's commitment as a signatory of the Scarborough Charter on Anti-Black Racism and Black Inclusion in Higher Education. These joyfully rich agreements hold StFX accountable to the communities we serve. We must remember where we came from to have a strong sense of where we are headed.

We are enriched by the diversity of perspectives on our campus, which includes interconnected histories of shared struggle and close relationships with the communities we serve, and is modelled by informed-consent, participatory action, and community-led engagement in all stages of the research process.

***Ksikeltaqn:** What We Value*

StFX's Strategic Research Plan 2025–2031 will continue to cultivate the research ecosystem reflected in the Research and Creative Works Plan from 2018–2025. This past plan's strategic principles have enabled high-quality, impactful, and ethically grounded research and work in creative fields. These principles will continue to guide future research by integrating research with teaching and student mentorship, valuing diverse forms of scholarship and creative works, and advancing a more equitable, diverse, inclusive, and accessible world through the



community-based and collaborative research that helps StFX to shape public trust and create innovation that benefits society as a whole. To ground us in these existing principles as we move forward in a good way together, we invoke the Mi'kmaq word *ksikeltaqn*, meaning something held dear, as a valued and protected thing. What we value and hold dear drives our research for the better and helps us remain accountable to the communities we serve.

We will let our principles and core values of integrity, dignity, truth, and respect for all — shaped by our university motto, *Teliaq ta'n Teluek* — guide our research initiatives over the next five years. We're also compelled to respond to the need for a more just, sustainable, and equitable future through creative innovation to address the challenges posed by rapidly advancing technology, a changing climate, and the need to think critically about the world around us. Adhering to our values will help us navigate these changes and develop the next generation of leaders who will tackle these issues and those to come.

Vision:

Research excellence rooted in community

Purpose:

Growing innovation for the common good, where research excellence serves society and improves the lives of Nova Scotians, Canadians, and the global community through meaningful change and impactful work.

Values:

Integrity—our moral compass in research excellence, which compels us to be honest, ethical, and truthful, and upholds academic freedom in all our work

Creativity—our incentive for making new things and solving big problems, which challenges us to leave the world around us better than we found it

Innovation—our desire to produce novel solutions with tangible societal and economic benefits, which leads us to produce excellent research with practical impact

Sustainability—our responsibility to prioritize long-term well-being over short-term results, which helps us keep our environments and communities healthy

Respect—our motivating force in building community trust, which ensures that our research is truly collaborative and in service of the public good



Kjijitaqn Naskwa'tatultiek: Sharing Our Knowledge Evenly

StFX has four strategic research areas around which we share our knowledge evenly (*kjijitaqn naskwa'tatultiek*), working together across disciplines and with different approaches to solve problems and make good decisions for the future. These strategic areas help us by cultivating and caretaking the relationships and good things we have already made here together. As we drive research creativity and innovation, we remember who we are doing this work for and we think ahead to how we might look after seven generations of beings on this land and in these waters. Our four strategic research areas will inform how we will deploy Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) support and future Tier 1 and Tier 2 CRC allocations, and how we prioritize our internal research funding strategically. We believe StFX is uniquely positioned to share our knowledge evenly, bundled together, across these four priority areas:

1. Healthy Lives for Stronger Communities

StFX is a leader in interdisciplinary health research, advancing well-being through community-engaged research, equity-focussed initiatives and policies, and evidence-based solutions that strengthen people, communities, and all living things, in line with our Coady Institute's leadership in "a full and abundant life for all." The Victor & Mona Dahdaleh Institute for Health Innovation will lead much of this work as the new home for the Interdisciplinary Health Program, Human Kinetics, Human Nutrition, Psychology, and the federal National Collaborating Centre for the Social Determinants of Health, in partnership with the Government of Nova Scotia. The Rankin School of Nursing, one of the most well-established nursing programs in Canada, is a national leader in the study of community health, health inequities, and the interdisciplinary intersection of health systems and the social determinants of health.

2. Climate-Resilient Futures

Responding to the urgent need for climate action, StFX's research innovation champions climate justice and environmental and community resilience in the building of sustainable futures. By combining science with the study and generation of policy, quantitative and qualitative data collection and interpretation, sustainable approaches to rural lifeways, and Indigenous knowledge between STEM (science, technology, education, math) and SSHA (social sciences, humanities, arts)-based research, StFX supports thriving communities and ecosystems in a changing world. Our interdisciplinary environmental research is grounded in our core science, education, economics, and policy disciplines and in the Schwartz School of Business to advance necessary solutions through computation,



estimation and reasoning, and industry-relevant practical applications of the latest technology, producing influential leaders in climate work.

3. Stories in Motion

StFX researchers tell stories that impact the everyday lives of those around us, using everything from archival research, classical philosophy, sound technology, cultural analysis, mixed-media art practice, creative writing, photography, animation, filmmaking, theatrical and musical performance. Knowledge mobilization and outreach in multiple languages and mediums also help researchers tell stories about our oceans, our lab experiments, and our pedagogy in culturally relevant ways that speak to people in their own communities about things that matter to them. Our research enhances our capacity to tell stories in relevant and accessible ways in everyday settings. As we share our knowledge in the community, we also learn from the communities we serve locally and globally, with our longstanding community partners such as Antigonish Jazz Fest, Theatre Antigonish, The Antigonish Review, L'Arche, and Antigonish Culture Alive.

4. Just Policy & Governance

Our university produces the next generation of leaders, from Prime Ministers and Premiers to community organizers, legal and policy experts, and educators in all areas of expertise. Exemplified in work led by the Brian Mulroney Institute of Government and the Deveau Institute for Indigenous Governance and Social Justice, our evidence-informed research on decision making at all levels of government and community work strengthens democracy, promotes equity and accountability, and deepens understanding between decision makers and citizens. Political leadership needs many critical thinkers at the table, bringing with them the best research in social and economic policy, political and anthropological science, ethics and education to advance robust, responsive, and relevant legal, pedagogical, and governance frameworks.

Weji-Tetapuategemk: Strive to Do What is Right

Our research community is abundant with knowledge, energy, and ideas to help teach our students and prepare them to become leaders worldwide. As we do so, we will ensure that our researchers mentor the next generation in the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA), and strive to do what is right across our research projects, as well as in funding, recruitment, retention, learning, and evaluation. We draw on our existing StFX policies and action plans in this work, enhanced by the CRC EDIA program, which has helped our institution launch the President's Action Committee on Anti-Racism (PACAR), our campus Accessibility Plan, and our Employment Equity Policy.



As we continually strive to do what is right at StFX, we employ the principle of “nothing about us without us” in our research activities, meaning that we will be of service to community and community-led in our research projects and approaches. We will strive to use community-based participatory action research principles when relevant, especially with 2SLGBTQIA+ communities in which sexual and gender identities may overlap across a range of privileges and marginalizations. Striving to do what is right also means that StFX is committed to addressing unintended cognitive and systems biases in research. We will use frameworks and tools provided by the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), of which StFX is a recent signatory, and uphold the First Nation Health Authority’s Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) and Cultural Safety and Humility Standard. These commitments ensure research practices respect cultural autonomy and amplify voices in ways that uphold dignity and inclusion.

StFX’s Indigenous-led and Indigenous-partnered research will be supported in alignment with Indigenous data sovereignty and Tri-Council principles and informed by the CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance, and, where relevant, Mi’kmaw Ethics Watch (MEW), to ensure meaningful engagement and relationship-building occurs between our researchers and communities. We follow the MEW principle that Mi’kmaw knowledge “is not free for the taking,” to ensure that our research is done in a good way and in alignment with Mi’kmaq sovereignty.

StFX’s Black-led and Black-partnered research will be supported through our institutional accountability in the signing of the Scarborough Charter and guided by the Research, Evaluation, Data Collection, and Ethics (REDE) Protocol for Black Populations in Canada, as we close the UN Declaration of the Decade for People of African Descent (2015–2025). We are committed to supporting Black humanity and the safeguarding of Black life and community well-being in this work and in all our research activities, paying particular attention to our province’s 52 historical African Nova Scotian communities as we do.

StFX is committed to learning as we grow our research ecosystem, approaching this learning with humility and in partnership with the communities we serve.

Tekweyulek: We Are With You

Our internal feedback process highlighted time, workload, space, funding, and staffing as critical challenges to developing research innovation and growth at StFX. Strategic actions were presented, focussing on equitable teaching release,



enhanced research staffing, training allocations, and transparency in space allocation. They are also aimed to expand research infrastructure through financial supports for graduate students, research travel and knowledge mobilization, and recognition of our campus research excellence. We need to implement *tekweyulek* across our campus and offer support to our students and researchers in order to help them thrive. StFX remains committed to making research opportunities available to our undergraduate and graduate students, recognizing that mentorship is a core scholarly activity, and supporting interdisciplinary and community-engaged research endeavours that benefit society beyond our campus.

While we will continue to support internal research symposia, such as: the Hive for Feminist Research and the Research Chairs Colloquium; interdisciplinary seed funding through our University Council for Research; annual merit awards through the University Research and Publishing Award; and knowledge mobilization funds through the Faculty Conference Travel Award. Yet, we can still do more to strengthen our community engagement and enhance research visibility, support our researchers in getting the tools, time, and facilities they need to conduct excellent research, and celebrate research impact for broad public uptake through the development of such honorary titles as University Research Professor for exceptional scholars. The following is a roadmap to support the implementation of this new Strategic Research Plan to achieve some of the suggestions we gathered as part of this planning process to better support our research community.

